



White paper

# The Ultimate Instagram Guide

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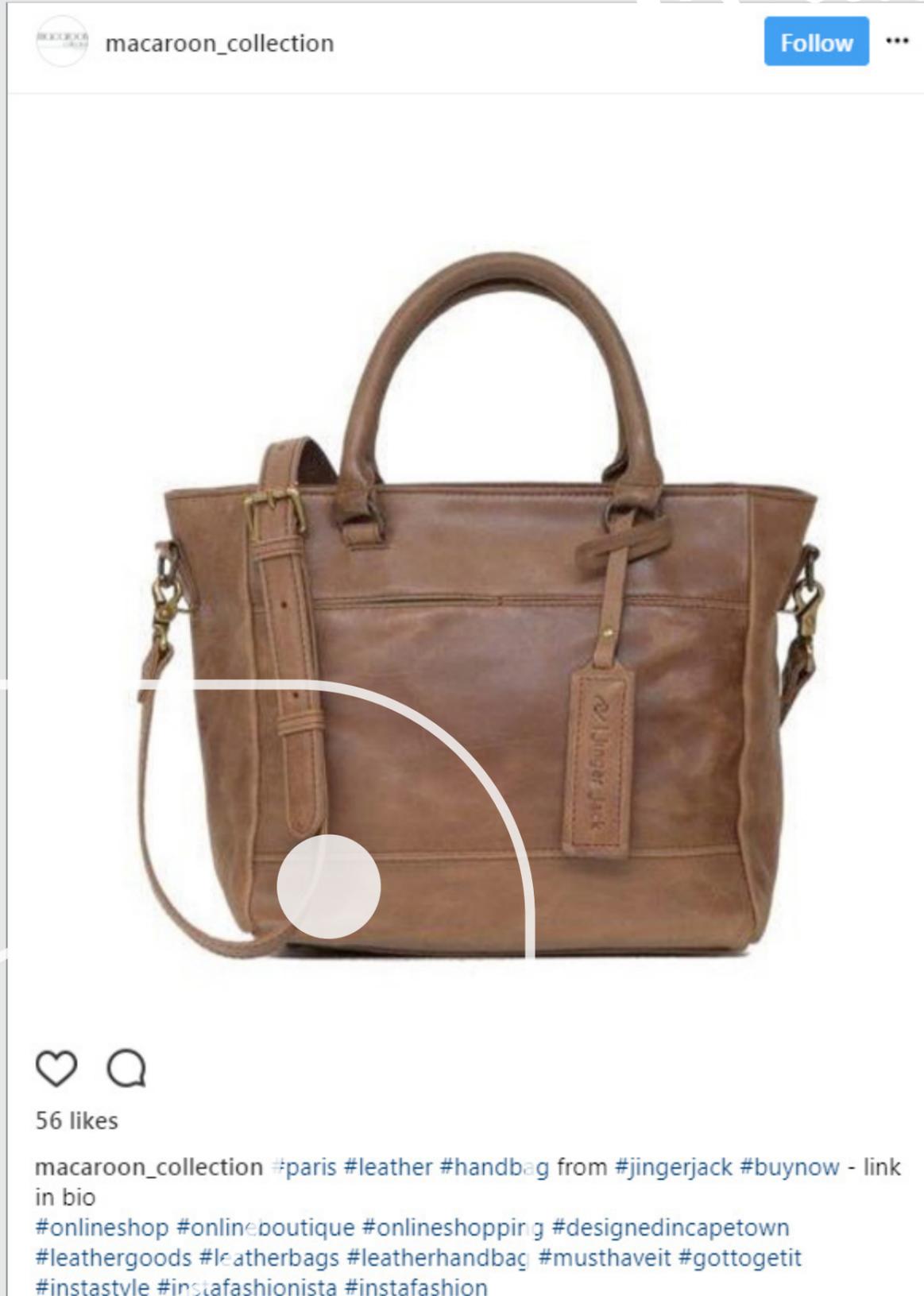
## Get more sales with ads on Instagram!

## The how-to guide

Instagram is an app which enables users to share photos and videos with the world. With over 700 million monthly users and almost 100 million new photos posted every day, this platform is also very interesting for advertisers.

However, to be successful with Instagram advertising, and thus increase sales, there are a few things that have to be taken into consideration.

# Instagram



## No one on Instagram wants to buy anything

Instagram is all about photos and videos. The platform is used to...

- find inspiration
- see what friends and influencers are posting
- avoid boredom

No one opens the app with the intention of buying something. As an advertiser, you should be aware of this fact.

It is therefore difficult to achieve a sale through just a simple product photo and a link to a product page. Which brings us to the next point...

# Instagram



## Instagram is a visual, short-lived medium

Remember that the decision to pay attention to your ad or not is made in a fraction of a second.

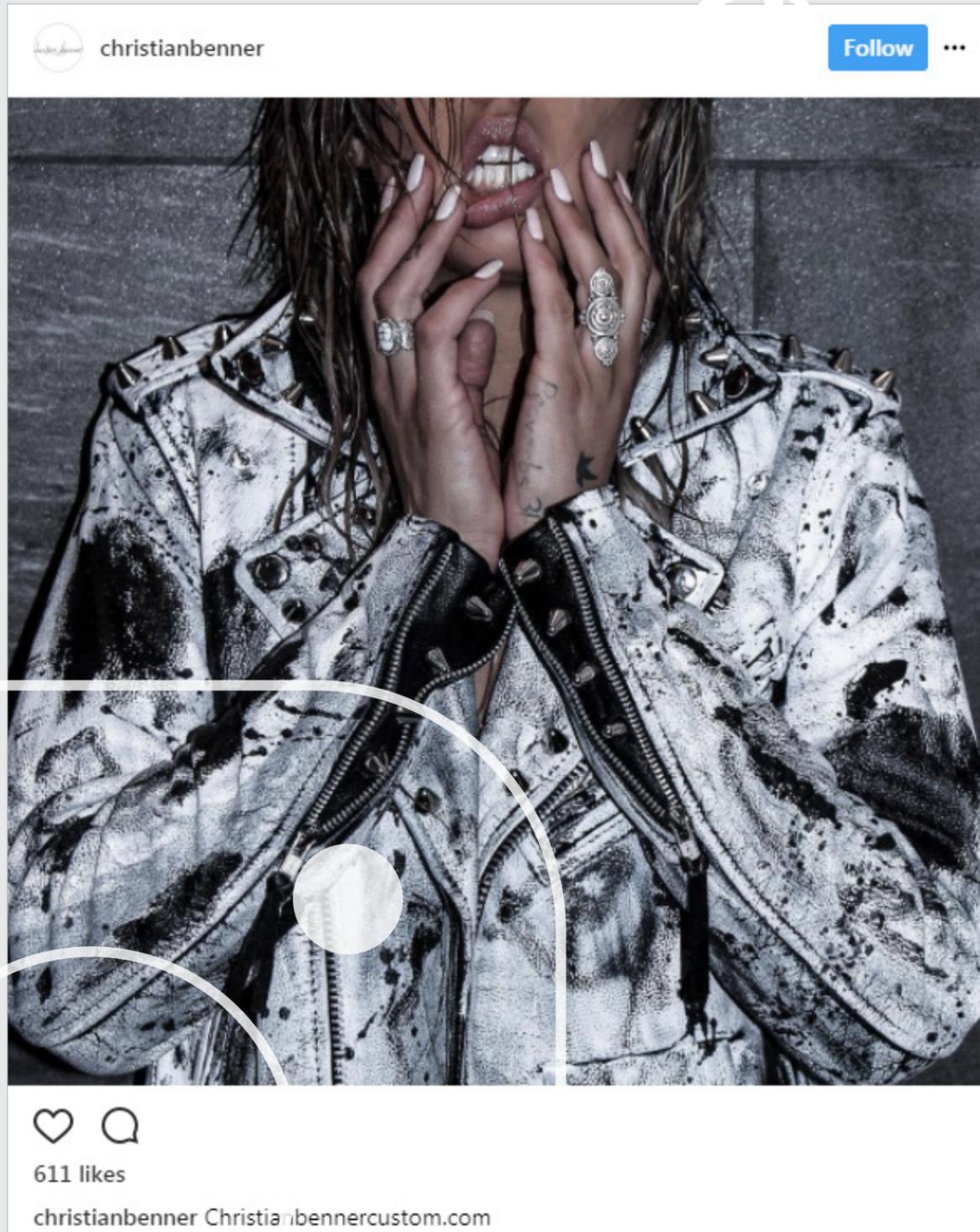
The photos you use for your ad should therefore not be complex or boring. Keep away from stock photos or unimaginative product photos!

Make sure that your product is the focal point, is set in

a natural environment and stands out against the background.

The quality of the photo is almost as important as the motif. Only use high resolution photos so that your ads are presented razor sharp. Nothing seems more unprofessional than a poor quality photo.

# Instagram



## Ads your customers like

Sounds logical, but is often disregarded by many advertisers.

Make sure that your ads are designed and formulated accordingly.

Address a young target group seriously even if you are only selling skateboards. Sending cat photos to dog owners, posting summer outfits in winter, or creating generally irrelevant ads will do little to

increase your sales via Instagram.

You will notice whether your ads are liked or not very quickly. The more unpopular an ad is, the less people will see it and the more expensive it becomes.

Ads that are popular with their target group appear more often in the feeds of the Instagram users. Which is why you should...



## Try things out! Especially in the beginning!

Are you Instagram rookie? If you don't have any Instagram experience and don't know what your customers like, then you should try out many different things.

Which type of ads do your customers react to best?:

- **Photo posts.** A standard post in which a photo is uploaded.
- **Video posts.** A post where a video up to one-minute can be uploaded.
- **Gallery posts.** A post where you can upload up to 10 photos and videos (This type of post is particularly suitable for showing all the different aspects of a product or for telling a story).

Does the target audience react better when a product is displayed with or without people? Serious or silly? Posts that ask the customer's opinion? Professional photos or snapshots? Which type of call-to-action is clicked on most?

There are countless variations that you should test with a small budget before investing large sums in an advertising campaign that brings no results.

Example:

Create three ads (photo, video and gallery ads) which present one single product. Let these ads run for 3-5 days with a small daily budget (5-20 euros) and then compare interactions, link-clicks, and conversion rates.

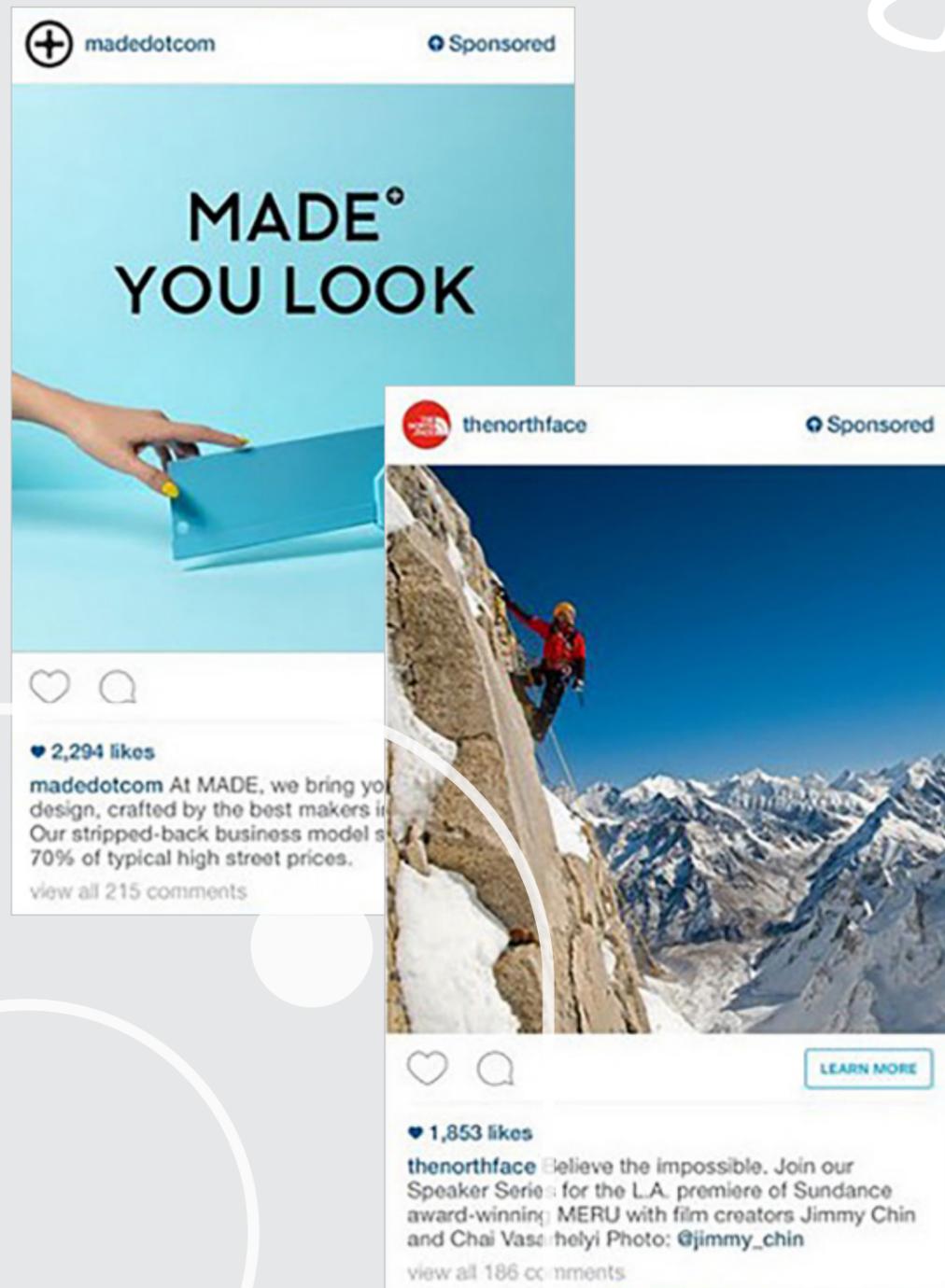
A winner can generally already be determined after this short period of time. Stop those ads that are not achieving the desired results.

Then, test whether the ad works better with a different text or alternative design. It is always possible to optimise an ad.

And, even when you have found a winning ad, it pays to regularly test new ideas and advertise other products.

Try to find out as much as possible about your potential customers' preferences. This will help you run effective advertising campaigns and, after a certain time, you will see which types of ads your customers react to best.

# Instagram



## The 20% text rule

If you already use ads on Facebook to increase sales in your shop, you have most probably already heard of the 20% rule.

Following the motto "a picture is worth a thousand words", Facebook advises that a maximum of 20% of the advertising image should be made up of text.

In order to pass on information about what the ad is actually about, there are two options:

1. A short, concise text in the image, but a more detailed text beneath the ad or a more clear call-to-action.
2. No text in the image, but an expressive image and text only beneath the ad.

# Instagram

## Ads with and from real people



Polished models are not popular with everyone.

Making ads with people who appear natural and are not Photoshop models can ensure that the target audience can better identify with your products and your shop.

Just as effective: Use photos which have been made by customers (user generated content / UGC).

User generated content is a powerful advertising instrument.

If a photo is of a happy customer rather than a brand or online shop, then it evokes a high level of credibility. After all, the customer is so satisfied with the product that they decided to share it with the whole world.

In a study by Nielsen, it was found that 92% of all consumers trust shopping recommendations from friends and family. And a total of 70% trust online recommendations even if they are made by strangers.

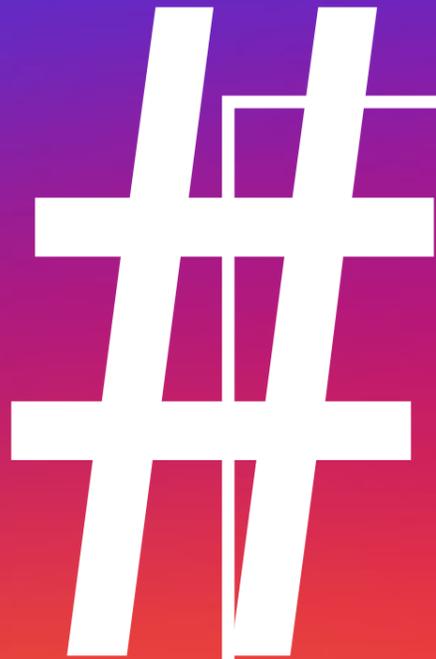
Fact: User generated content increases conversion rates!

Also, placing photos taken by happy customers on the product page increases the conversion rate on average by 4.6%. The interaction with ads also increases when UGC is used. (Source: [www.olapic.com/resources/the-death-of-stock-photos/](http://www.olapic.com/resources/the-death-of-stock-photos/)).

The good news: Many consumers have no problem with their content being used by shops or brands. On the contrary, approximately 65% actually feel honoured. (Source: "How User Generated Content will help your Instagram brand", Anthony Clasen, Instagram Marketing, 2015)

Search through Instagram for good photos of products that you sell, ask the Instagram user for permission to use the photo and then integrate it into your marketing campaign.

By doing so, you can ensure that potential customers are better able to identify with your advertising campaign and place more trust in your products and your shop. This, at best, can lead to an increase in sales.



# Use hashtags

Social media and hashtags go hand in hand.

It is recommended that you create your own hashtags and use them in posts to increase brand awareness.

However, you should also use a unique shop-branded hashtag in your ads (e.g. #Zalando). Even though ads are not shown in the hashtag search, they ensure that users only see photos of you and your happy customers when they search your brand's hashtag.

# Calls to action

Exactly as with Facebook, a call to action can also be added to ads in Instagram.

These are a few of the calls to action which can be used beneath the ads:

- Buy now
- Install now
- Log in
- Read more
- See more

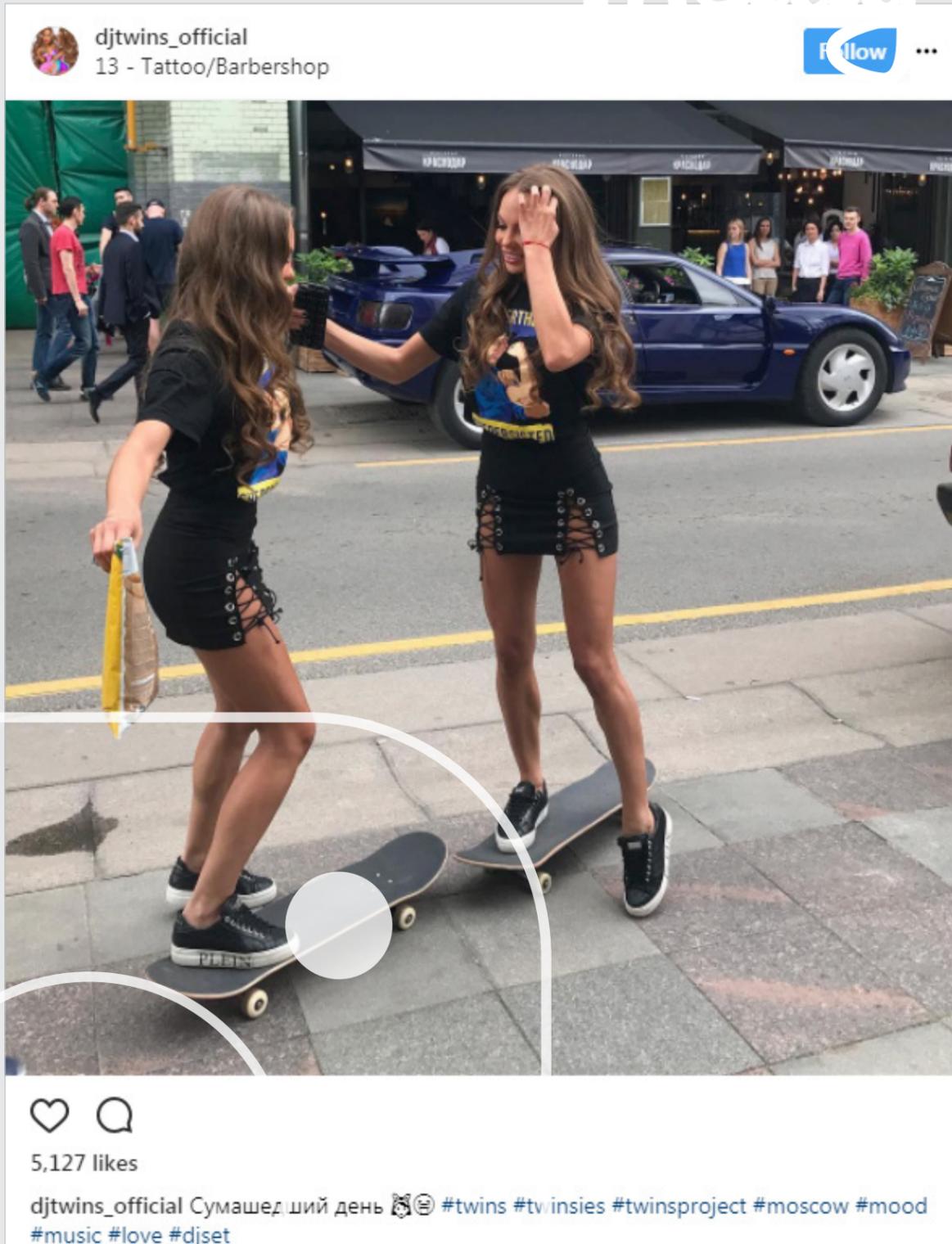
Make sure that the call to action suits the chosen ad and leads to a landing page which is relevant, provides the target audience with more information, and is *responsively* designed.

**Tip:** Post the ad as a normal post after you have run the ad. This ensures that your fans can find the offer again even if they had not directly reacted to the ad the first time they saw it or if they need some more time to consider it.

Source:  
<https://allfacebook.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ig-call-to-action-1024x576.jpg>



# Instagram



## Targeted advertising

You can address specific customer groups both in Facebook and on Instagram.

Do you already have a large e-mail list but only a few Instagram followers? Use the e-mail addresses (of course, keeping within the data protection regulations) and try to gain the customers who do not yet follow you on Instagram. You can build up a large group of followers in this way.

You can also send ads to your most loyal and highest-spending customers to reward them with

special offers for their loyalty, to test new products, or simply to say thank you.

In the same way, you can use existing customers and followers to create and acquire a so-called lookalike audience. A lookalike audience is made up of users who show similar online behaviour to your own customers.

The probability of being successful with lookalike audiences is higher than when acquiring users who only possibly suit your shop.

# Create a personal account

Highly recommendable:

**Also use Instagram privately.**

Even if you don't want to post photos or videos, a private account can be very worthwhile.

Follow your international competitors and brands that invest a huge budget in social media marketing each year or have an in-house Instagram team.

Draw inspiration from how these companies operate on Instagram and adapt their successful strategies to your brand.

You will also see Instagram from the user's perspective, get a feeling for what makes for interesting advertisements and which types of ads are annoying.

# Instadraw



## Use successful design recipes

Instagram is all about photos and videos. But not every photo is suitable for use in an ad.

There are a few types of photo to which users react better. According to a study by Curalate, the following types of photos develop the biggest responses:

- Bright photos
- Photos with natural light instead of artificial
- Photos with predominantly cold colours (e.g. blue, gray) instead of warmer colours (red, orange)
- Photos with only one dominant colour



## Controversial? Likes & comments

You don't have to start a fundamental discussion in order to produce a successful ad. But it helps if you ask a question in the ad or post a photo that causes a reaction among your target audience.

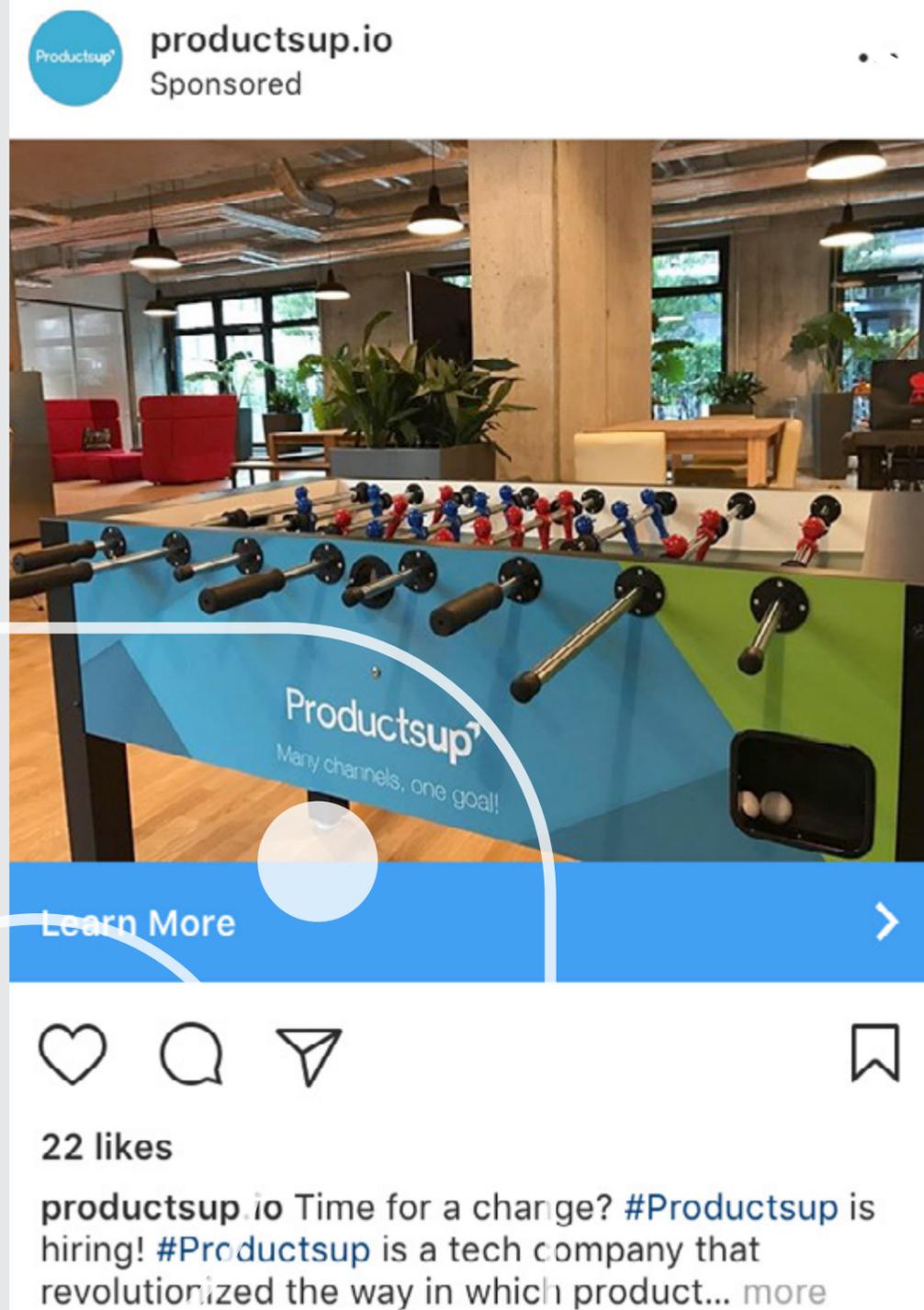
If your ad is commented on and "liked" then you know that you are doing the right thing.

This can be achieved by motivating the target audience to do something and by interacting with them:

- Tag someone who would look good in this outfit!
- The left outfit or the right one?
- Do you recognise this?
- Tag your best friend!
- We like it! Do you?
- What is your tip for hot summer days?
- Who wants to be on holiday right now?

Additionally, videos and photos of people and cute animals tend to guarantee a large number of comments, as do competitions.

# Instagram



## Fans > sales

As mentioned in the first point, no one opens the app with the intention of buying something.

Unlike with Google AdWords, where the advertising budget can quickly be converted into sales, Instagram should be considered as a long-term investment.

Direct sales can normally only be generated with Instagram ads when linked with excellent offers and products. However, the profit margin is generally low.

The focus of your advertising campaign should therefore not be on a short-term increase in sales, but on winning over new customers (or respectively, on collecting fans for your shop/your brand).

Remember that once you have won over customers for your shop or gained Instagram followers, you can advertise to them again and again, free of charge.

Regardless of how they are reactivated (and buy from your online shop again), whether by e-mail or an Instagram post, you incur no profit-eating advertising costs. This is why investing the time to set up a community of fans or an e-mail list of followers is so important.

You create a group of people who are interested in your products and your shop. Imagine that your online shop were linked with an Instagram account that 2,000 interested shoppers follow. Or 20,000... Or 200,000...

Your sales increase with your number of fans.

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